

EXETER HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC ORDERS COMMITTEE

29 April 2022

Present:-

Councillors D Barnes (Chair), T Adams, M Asvachin, S Aves, A Leadbetter, P Prowse and C Whitton

Exeter City Council

Councillors D Harvey, P Holland, M Pearce and T Wardle

Apologies:-

Councillors Y Atkinson and R Hannaford

* **46** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 and the special meeting on 12 April 2022 be signed as correct records.

* **47** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

No item was raised as a matter of urgency.

* **48** **Special Meeting to consider proposed Traffic Regulation Orders:
Magdalen Road and Chard Road**

RESOLVED that a special meeting be held on 6 June 2022 at 2.15 pm to consider proposed Traffic Regulation Orders in respect of Magdalen Road and Chard Road, Exeter.

* **49** **Bus Services in Exeter**

Stagecoach had sent their apologies for the meeting.

The Committee requested that the following questions be relayed to the Company and the responses be reported to members:

(a) Have recent reductions in bus service frequency in order to achieve increased reliability achieved the desired effect?

(Stagecoach subsequently advised: yes, for now although it is a moving situation and we have further remedies in the coming months that will help solve the problem).

(b) Were any further reduction in services planned from June onwards;

(N.B. Stagecoach subsequently advised that it was in negotiation with the County Council regarding the network and any future announcements would be made in due course);

(c) In relation to a fire incident (on 7 April 2022) which involved the evacuation of a Bus in Countess Wear: (i) the condition of buses in regard to fire safety; and (ii) the level of training provided for drivers in relation to evacuation procedures;

(N.B Stagecoach subsequently advised that Drivers are trained when they join the company on evacuation and use of fire extinguishers. Drivers get additional safety related training every five years).

(c) (i) Are any further reductions in bus services or increased fares planned for 2022? (ii) Why cannot the continuing shortage of Stagecoach bus drivers be addressed by offering increased salaries given that the national Stagecoach profits (nationally) rose by 104.3% (£16.1M to £32.9M) during the half year ending 30/10/21?

(N.B. Stagecoach subsequently advised that they could not confirm any fare increase as this was dependent on inflation; and that they were offering increased salaries. They had gone up last October by between 4.4% and 18% and they were negotiating their next increase, which was due 1st May; and that Stagecoach in Devon made very little profit).

(d) Complaints in relation to alleged closed public toilets at the Exeter Bus Station toilets in April and follow-up actions, number of toilets at the station and facilities for disabled patrons, and contingency arrangements if toilets are closed.

(N.B. Stagecoach subsequently advised that none of the toilets were closed but there had been a problem with the barrier which was being addressed)

The local Member expressed his gratitude to Stagecoach for the reinstated H service West Garth Road.

* **50** **Taxis using "bus gates" in Exeter**

The Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste reported that any exemption for taxis in relation to bus gates would be considered on a case by case basis depending on individual circumstances and the consultation response. However, compliance and enforcement were more problematic with any additional exemptions and generally they should be minimised. However, new legislation was being proposed which would give local authorities powers to enforce (with the use of cameras for example) and the matter would be considered at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

* 51 **Concessionary Fares Scheme**

The Head of Planning, Environment and Transportation reported on the operation of the Concessionary Fares Scheme.

The National Bus Pass entitled the pass holder to free off-peak travel on local bus services anywhere in England. Older residents of England in line with the state pension age, and those with certain types of disability, were eligible for a Pass.

The County Council was statutorily responsible to:

1. Issue a National Bus Pass to eligible residents within their area. There were currently 146,392 valid passes issued by the County Council; and
2. Reimburse local bus companies for all travel commencing within their area for all eligible English residents.

In the first three quarters of the 2021/22 financial year, April 2021 to December 2021, overall passenger numbers peaked at 75% of pre pandemic levels in November 2021. Use of the National Bus Pass peaked at 59% of pre-pandemic levels in September 2021. Figures for the last quarter of 2021/22, January to March 2022, were not yet available.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 the County Council maintained concessionary reimbursement at 100% of pre-pandemic levels during the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years. This followed the Department for Transport (DfT) guidance to maintain payments so that essential services continued to be provided.

In October 2021 the DfT issued guidance setting out a sliding scale of reimbursement for the 2022/23 financial year until parity with actual levels of travel was reached. This started at 90% of pre-pandemic levels in April 2022 dropping to 65% by March 2023.

As the recovery in passenger numbers slowed due to the Omicron variant, the DfT issued revised guidance on 29 March 2022 with a revised sliding scale. This set out a reduction starting at 90% of pre-pandemic levels from July 2022 dropping to 70% by March 2023.

The National Bus Pass budget in Devon for 2022/23 was £7.625million

In terms of supporting public transport, the budget allocation for 2022/23 was around £9m and made up of the County Council revenue budget, S.106 contributions, the on-street parking account and Department of Transport grant funding.

* **52** **Exeter Residents Parking Priorities**

The Committee considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/22/21) on proposals to prioritise the future roll-out of residents parking schemes in Exeter.

At the meeting of the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee on 18 January 2021, it had been decided that residents parking schemes would be designed and progressed for a number of areas in the city (Wardrew Road, Barton Road and Queens Road areas, including Edwin Road (St Thomas Area)). A number of other areas were supportive of residents parking schemes and these proposals would be designed and progressed at a later date subject to the resources available.

The areas covered were as follows (in priority order) noting that the order was subject to ongoing review with the progress of individual schemes and available resources:

- St Thomas Area
- Woodwater Lane Area – extension to Zone S7
- Sweetbrier Lane Area
- Cotfield Street Area
- New Valley Road Area
- Southbrook Road Area
- Heraldry Way Area

Members noted that Schemes which were subject to developer funding were not included in the above and would be progressed when funds were made available (and subject to officer resourcing).

Members also referred to the delays as a result of the limited resources available and the resulting concerns from local residents.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor S Aves, **SECONDED** by P Prowse

RESOLVED

(a) that the update on the progress on Exeter Residents Parking schemes be noted;

(b) that the priority of schemes as outlined above be approved; and

(c) that the Cabinet be urged to provide additional resourcing (both financially and Officer time) to progress residential parking schemes as outlined above in a timelier manner given the long delays already experienced and the impact on local residents.

* **53** **Topsham Residents Parking Extension - Approval to Implement Scheme**

The Committee considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/22/20) on proposals designed to increase the availability of on-street parking for residents, encourage turnover of limited waiting areas to support businesses and encourage longer term visitors to use off-street car parks.

The proposed traffic order was advertised from 17 March until 14 April 2022 on the extension of the current scheme and the results were summarised in the Report (Appendix 1).

The local Member referred to the level of objections in certain areas which necessitated further review of the details.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor A Leadbetter, **SECONDED** by Councillor P Prowse and

RESOLVED

(a) that the results of the consultation be noted; and

(b) that the extension to the residents parking scheme in Topsham, as advertised, be approved subject to delegated authority to the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure and Waste to determine the details in consultation with the Chair and the local County Councillor.

* **54** **Electric Vehicle Charge Network in Exeter**

In accordance with Standing Order 23(2) Councillors P Prowse (in regard to (a) below) and M Pearce (in regard to (b) below) had requested that the Committee consider this matter: (a) Charging point bays (electric) and street furniture associated with them; and (b) Roll out of the EV charge network in Exeter and update to include (i) progress of the previously authorised schemes; and (ii) future plans for expansion of the network, particularly any public consultation on locations that may take place.

The Energy Manager reported on progress and other issues, as follows:

The Energy Manager reported on progress and other issues, as follows:

- the developing technology and advantages and disbenefits of lamppost charging points and other charging solutions such as the use of gullies (the cost liability for gullies was yet to be determined);
- a new EV Charging strategy was being developed for Devon (in consultation with District Local Authorities) and would be subject to public consultation in due course which would address outstanding issues including design (and pedestrian access parameters);

- the County Council believed that Exeter City Council was developing its own strategy and Devon County Council Officers would continue to liaise;
- the details of the current provision in St Leonards had been included in the statutory consultation prior to installation although detail on the covering on the charge points was not clear;
- Rapid Charging Devon was part of an innovation programme to develop and trial new technology and sites may use alternative technology following feedback from the public and Members;
- the provision in St Leonards (and others approved by the Committee) was currently for 'Co Car' use only due to technical issues with the charging units and this was being addressed by the operator, Wenea;
- Wenea was working to ensure public charging facilities were available for the public at all sites as soon as possible and the County Council Officers were supporting this;
- County Council Officers understood the need for further quantitative and qualitative research into the impact of on-street charging points and would be providing reports to councillors in the future; and
- the officers have agreed, following consultation with Members, a corrective strategy with Wenea for phase 1 and phase 2 sites and would provide an update at the next Committee if required.

The Committee noted the update.

* **55** **Actions Taken Under Delegated Powers**

The Committee noted the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/22/22) on actions taken under delegated powers.

* **56** **Dates of Meetings**

6 June (special meeting at 2.15 pm), and 15 July 2022, 14 October 2022, 16 January 2023; and 21 April 2023 (all to start at 10.30 am).

Up-to-date information on dates available on-line at:

[Browse meetings - Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee - Democracy in Devon](#)

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.05 pm